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ABSTRACT

Inservice training for teachers must provide opportunities for sharing among participants, involve teachers in planning and implementation, provide practical experiences, involve parents, be offered at a convenient time to allow full involvement, and offer experiences which teachers can use. One project for staff development began when a group of parents, teachers, and administrators committed itself to raising the reading levels of all students in a junior high school in which such levels had been deteriorating. Consultants helped design a staff development program, then met for the first phase with the entire faculty to allow teachers to express their concerns, to offer an opportunity for discussing a definition of and priority for reading and variables which affect progress, and to share strategies which could be used with students. Teacher completed inventories helped consultants focus on specified needs. Phases two and four consisted of individual and small group sessions with the consultants to consider strengths and weaknesses of teachers and pupils. Phase three was a total group session focused on test taking skills and on teacher made tests. Phase five involved visitation in this classroom by the consultants. (TJ)

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The "ACTION MODEL" for Staff Development in a Secondary School

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Beginning in the sixties there was an upsurge in staff development programs in school districts for teachers. Many of those inservice programs focused on presenting innovative ideas to the expanding group of classroom and special teachers. Today, because of limited budgets and dwindling enrollments in school districts, the number of classroom and special teachers are being curtailed.

The 1970 Bureau of Labor Statistics published projection that a surplus of two million teachers may develop by 1980 has had the effect of stabilizing the job market in education in most large cities, thus creating the "aging teacher" phenomenon. Previously, teachers insecure about the quality of their performances and those disenchanted with their system or situation left the field. Now, whether fortunately or unfortunately and for whatever reason, we probably have more experienced teachers than ever before. While Administrators may be encouraged by stability they want to insure that this ensconcing does not cause stagnation in today's ever changing educational arena. Administrators also face a financial dilemma with regard to use of personnel. Reduced funds for special needs programs have forced them to reallocate rather than hire additional staff for essential services and innovative programs. Teachers are therefore going through staff development programs for these reasons and in increased numbers. These activities have been called continuing education, professional development, and inservice education and vary in format and type. Some are transitional (from pre to in), comprehensive school renewal, role reorientation, content or specific skill development, personal growth retooling, and career progression.

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While there appear to be many arenas for obtaining inservice-universities, state department teams, private consultants- there is mounting concern for relevancy, adequacy, and efficiency in the inservice programs which will ameliorate the development of the teachers, other staff, and ultimately, children. It is the purpose of this paper to discuss inservice as it relates to these concerns and to offer a paradigm which addresses itself particularly to them.

Inservice is defined as "activities engaged in by professional personnel during their service and designed to contribute to improvement on the job." [1] While this definition serves well, some in education feel that they are fulfilling the requirements by involving the faculty in a "One shot" type format which serves more to inspire than to improve. Usually the Word is brought by a widely known name in the field of education who administers to teachers the "shot," and then moves on to spread the Word to others in jurisdictions near and far. Interestingly, this approach actually does inspire many teachers to desire educational change, but this aspiration is short lived without practical suggestions for implementation.

Practicality was also the consideration in Ainsworth's study.[2] Seventy nine percent of the teachers interviewed mentioned practicality as an important consideration when planning inservice, something which would help the teacher do a better job in the particular teaching situation they find themselves. These teachers referred to "up-in-the-sky" ideas as those promugated by speakers who were not and who had not been inside a classroom in recent years.

Just what worthwhile suggestions include would depend upon the specific school, its staff, and its student population; and this information can only be ascertained from the participating school staff. In order, therefore, for inservice to be of any utility, staff must have respected input into what is required.

Another element involved in effective inservice is providing support for the individual staff member. Realizing that students have varied strengths and needs,

inservice educators must also be aware that teachers too are at different stages in their professional development. Consideration must be given to the participants who have found that the methods and materials they use seem to "fit" the students with whom they are working and should be encouraged to share these ideas with others. In the Ainsworth study for example, the majority of the teachers expressed interest in a program in which they would exchange ideas. This, says Ainsworth, builds interest while also providing practicality. If it actually works for some teachers, others would be more prone to try it too. At the same time there are teachers who have had very limited professional experiences. They might need an individual orientation and may or may not be aware of their needs. When inservice programs are organized they should allow for individuals to express their needs and strengths as they perceive them.

Time is of the utmost importance when initiating inservice activities. Administrators who profess commitment to inservice and then proceed to institute all these activities after the school day ends are actually expressing a different priority. It is difficult for teachers to think creatively or absorb much in the way of useful information after teaching all day. When asked what expectations he had for the day's inservice, one secondary teacher replied, "I expect to hear a reason why I should be here rather than at home with my family." Time of inservice offerings and duration of same then is a major concern to teachers.

Consideration of parents' ideas and suggestions is also crucial in initiating staff development and assessing needs from a total school perspective. While it has always been apparent that parents are their children's first and most influential teachers, they have in the past been asked only to be responsible for sending healthy, well-disciplined students to school and to allow the teachers to provide the necessary cognitive skills. Recently this focus has changed. Parents are now called upon to assist and facilitate the teachers in their children's cognitive development as well. Hess (1977) reported at the office of Child Development's conference on "Parents,

Children and Continuity" that programs which showed the most gains in IQ scores and cognitive skill development were those in which parents were most involved. The gains he reported were maintained into the children's secondary school experiences.

Finally, activities in which teachers are involved must be of such quality that staff will want to participate. There should be opportunities where teachers can produce something to utilize in their classes and share with others. Through this mechanism inservice educators can promote interest as well as build accountability. The lecture type approach, however well delivered, may miss the mark with a faculty who needs something tangible to give their students the next day. For example, a presentation on making informal diagnostic instruments should be valuable to most teachers and can be used at any time. Such an instrument devised by the participants and shared immediately can create a feeling of accomplishment for the teacher who developed it.

Thus, several goals for inservice become apparent:

Inservice must provide opportunities for sharing among participants.

Inservice must involve teachers in both planning and implementation.

Inservice must provide practical experiences for teachers.

Parents must be involved in the endeavor.

Inservice must be offered at a time in which all can be actively and fully involved.

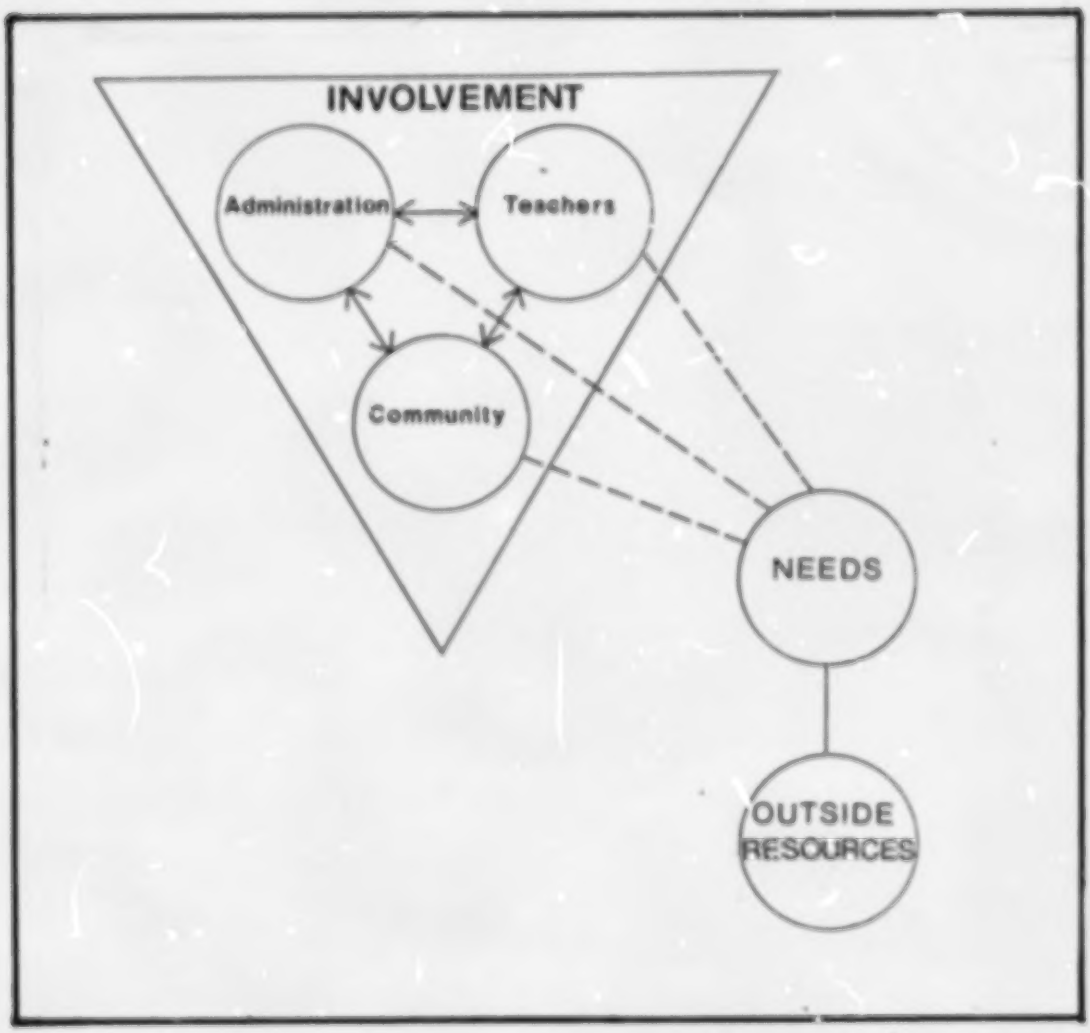
Inservice must offer experiences of such quality that teachers can easily and efficiently obtain a product.

Continued professional growth is a vital aspect of professional staff development programs; therefore, in addition to the aforementioned goals, sessions should be based on the perceived requirements of participants and provide action oriented experiences involving administrators, teachers and consumers. The action oriented experiences should be those that can be utilized immediately in the classroom setting to augment the instructional program.

Description of Model

The "Action Model" for staff development described in this paper was developed while working with administrators and teachers at a local junior high school in Washington, D.C. The components are: Administrators, Community members and Teachers Involved with Outside Resources based on the Needs of instructional personnel. Each component is essential and provides for an overall framework for implementation of a viable staff development program to enhance and ameliorate the instructional program in the school. Each component is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: "ACTION MODEL" FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT



Administrators

Administrators are those key persons responsible for managing and directing the affairs of the school. They must (1) be sensitive to the needs and concerns of staff, community and students, (2) provide opportunities for staff, community members, and students to offer input into the instructional program and professional development activities, (3) be committed through action to the overall need and plans for staff development, and (4) be able to ascertain needed resources, human and material, to implement an effective staff development program.

Community Members

Community members are those consumers, who directly or indirectly through their children, are recipients of the school's instructional program. They should be actively involved with the school, providing overall support and assistance in the instructional program and strengthening school-community relations.

Teachers

Teachers are the key recipients in a staff development program. They must be (1) involved totally in the planning of the staff development programs based on their perceived needs and the requirements of students in their classes and (2) committed to upgrading and augmenting their skills thereby enabling them to provide an instructional program to meet the diverse needs of individual students.

Involvement

Involvement of all key person- Administrators, Teachers, Community members including parents and Outside Resources/Consultants in the overall staff development program is fundamental in implementing a program to effectuate change for the benefit of students.

Outside Resources/Consultants

Outside Resources or Consultants are those persons who assist in the planning and implementation of the staff development program. These persons must be sensi-

tive to the needs of participants and knowledgeable about the character of the school including cultural background of students, school environment, as well as the specific content areas or participant specialities. Their major thrust should be working with individuals or small groups equipping them to become resources for each other thus continuing the work in the school after the consultants have departed. This maximizes the impact of the Staff Development Program within the school, and insures a mushrooming effect. These facilitators then are continuing their work by developing leadership capacity within the school. This action maximizes impact upon the total school and give impetus to accountability.

Needs

Consideration of the perceived needs of the participants is vital in planning and implementing a staff development program. Understanding needs provides the basic framework for formulating plans for an action oriented staff development program. The staff, parents and students should view themselves as the integral part of the program.

The Procedure

An ad hoc committee consisting of parents, teachers and administrators was constituted at a local junior high school to concentrate on a major concern of the group -- the continued deterioration of reading levels of students. After much discussion the group committed itself to a major goal: that of raising the reading levels of all students in the school. This concerned group realized that implementation of the objective should involve all staff and faculty if it were to be effective. The committee also expressed the need for outside assistance. Several local universities were contacted for assistance in planning for the implementation of the program within the school. Consultants from two universities teamed in the Staff Development effort. They met with the instructional leader, (principal), to map out plans for designing a staff development program to meet expressed needs of group and to discuss parameters for systematic involvement throughout the year.

As can readily be perceived, this "Action Model" for staff development was inaugurated: The Administrator, Community members including parents, and Teachers Involved with Outside Resources/Consultants based on expressed Needs of the Participants.

The model was created by working with the school personnel in phases.

Phase I: "Total Group"

The first staff development session began at the beginning of the school year prior to students returning. A major concern expressed by teachers at this meeting was organizing the classroom to meet the needs of students having difficulty reading and handling content area materials effectively.

The total faculty and staff -- teachers, counselors, aides, principal, and librarian -- participated in a large group session. The goal was to provide a basic framework for organizing the classroom to meet the needs of students. The objectives were (1) to provide a forum for teachers to express their concerns, (2) to offer an opportunity for participants to discuss in small groups a definition of and priority for reading as well as variables which affect progress in learning to read in the content areas, and (3) to share strategies that could be utilized with students at the beginning of the school year to assist in developing their needed reading skills. In Phase I, teachers were asked to fill out a "Rate Your Class" inventory (Figure 2) in order that consultants could ascertain pertinent information about each teacher's class to focus on needs they specified. This inventory elicited information about approximate reading levels and interests of the students, the teacher's class and homework requirements which utilized reading, and the teacher's proficiency in the use of methods for teaching reading and study skills. The teachers also expressed their individual needs related to improving the reading skills of their students.

Figure 2 RATE YOUR CLASS

(Select one class to focus on in your answers).

1. What are the reading levels in your class?

   _____

2. How do you know? _____

3. How do you handle these differences

   in classroom and home assignments _____

   in individual assignments? _____

4. How often do you give homework? _____

5. Do students have to study at home for your exams? Yes ☐ No ☐

6. How many tests, quizes, or exams do you give per semester?

   _____

7. What objectives do you intend for your students to reach by the end of the Course? _____

   _____

8. How will you achieve these goals? _____

   _____

9. What resources do you need to achieve these goals?

   human _____ hardware _____

   books _____

10. What reading skills are essential to learning your subject area?

    _____

11. Do you use -

    - one text - multi texts - no text

    - handouts - learning centers - other (specify) _____

    _____

12. In your teaching do you use

    Lecture - lecture/practicum - practicum - grouping - individualisation ?

13. Are you able to capitalize on student's interests in your teaching?

    yes _____ no _____

    If yes, how _____

Phases II and IV: "Individual Seminars"

A few weeks after the initial session consultants returned to the school to work with teachers individually and in small groups. During this session participants were encouraged to express more specifically their individual strengths and needs as well the strengths and needs of their students.

These individual sessions were held in a classroom organized into a "workshop center" created by the inservice educators/consultants. Professional books and journals, along with samples of instructional materials of high content interest and low readability levels were provided for use by the participants. In these phases, the "Rate Your Class" inventory also served as a basis for planning further staff development workshops.

Teachers requested assistance in diverse areas. Since consultants could not provide on-the-spot assistance in all areas at once, they developed composite list of needs and later prepared a packet of materials to send to each teacher which addressed the needs they specified. Thus, between visits, the consultants were still in communication with staff providing for continuity and offering tangible and practical information for individuals as requested.

During Phase IV, "Individual Seminars" were conducted about five weeks later and followed the same format utilized in Phase II.

Phase III: "Total and Departmental Groups"

Four weeks after the individual seminars were conducted in Phase II a third total group session was held. Consultants focused on "Test Taking Skills" and "Teacher Made Tests" since all participants listed these as priorities.

The total group was divided into departmental groups according to content areas. Staff who were not attached to a department could choose the group they wished to attend. In the smaller groups Consultants focused on three areas of needs "Vocabulary

Development," "Study Skills," and "Following Directions" while addressing particular departmental needs. Emphasis was placed on how the teacher could develop a student's reading skill within his/her content area. Alternative strategies were suggested for teachers to use to develop and reinforce skills taught. Sharing ideas that worked with the teachers was encouraged and their suggestions were highlighted. Teachers were asked to evaluate the inservice program at the end of each session.

Phase V: "Visitation Within Classroom By Consultants"

Individual teachers could request the consultants to provide on-the-spot assistance within the classroom. This was important for several reasons. Teachers felt that consultants could better address their concerns because they had spent time in their class with their students attempting to implement suggestions they had provided. Moreover, when participants saw consultants involved in the classroom actually working with students they believed that the ideas can really work. This also gives creditability to consultants because teachers know they have been involved in the "real life" situation -- the classroom, and specifically their classrooms.

After each phase, there was opportunity for principal and consultants to meet and share outcomes of the sessions. This was also ample opportunity for consultants to support individual suggestions teachers made to enhance the reading program. For example, teachers felt the need to have a room in which to preview films and slides before presentation to their classes. Consultants reinforced this suggestion and the principal immediately put it into operation.

Interest was high throughout each phase of the program as indicated by individual calls made by teachers to consultants seeking more information about reading. As a follow-up to the staff development program there was an overwhelming interest in an inservice course in Reading in the Content Area which could be used for recertification credit. This was conducted by the inservice educators/consultants at a convenient school site. Other teachers from an area junior high school had heard the word and also signed up for the class. As a culminating activity, teachers were

encouraged to participate in an all day Saturday workshop conducted by the participating universities. This workshop entitled "Functional Reading Skills for Urban Survival" evoked total interest and participation by the teachers from the inservice class. Lunch was provided and small group "talk with participants" sessions ensued following the major presentation. Obviously they had found a reason to spend a Saturday in a reading seminar. Their evaluations of the conference were excellent and they seemed excited about reading and their participation excited the consultants as well.

Summary

School systems recognize that there is a constant need for teachers to engage in professional development to upgrade and augment their skills. However, if staff development programs are to be effective they must focus specifically on the needs of those individuals involved.

The "ACTION MODEL" for staff development provides for those persons involved in the immediate instructional program of the school -- Administrators, Community members including parents, Teachers Involved with Outside Resources/Consultants based on Needs. This model is conducive to impacting upon the total instructional program of the school and can be utilized in working with teachers in all subject areas and levels.

The "ACTION MODEL" provides for Action within the school. The Administrators through Action provide leadership, support, and commitment to teachers, students, and community.

The Community members through Action provide support to the school and their children, and teachers.

The Teachers through Action oriented strategies based on the needs of students provide opportunities for maximizing the learning opportunities and achievement levels of students.

Action on the part of all Involved including Outside Resources based on Needs provides a model of staff development to enhance the professional growth of teachers

and staff thereby upgrading the level of acheivement of students and offering opportunity for Dual Accountability. And after all, that's where the Action is

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